

**Wisconsin
Department
of Tourism**



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

2001 SNOWMOBILE STUDY

RECREATIONAL EXPENDITURES

May 2001

The Findings

Snowmobile Days

According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, 236,787 snowmobiles were registered during the 2000 – 2001 snowmobiling season. In addition, 59,623 people purchased a snowmobile pass.

Those who Registered a Snowmobile or Purchased a Snowmobile Pass

	Total #
Registered snowmobiles	236,787
<u>Snowmobile passes purchased</u>	<u>59,623</u>
Total universe	296,410

The majority of these snowmobilers are Wisconsin residents (75%).

Those who Registered a Snowmobile or Purchased a Snowmobile Pass *Residents and Non-Residents*

	Total #	Percent of total %
Wisconsin residents (registered snowmobiles)	222,447	75
Non-residents	<u>73,963</u>	<u>25</u>
Non-residents who registered a snowmobile	14,340	5
<u>Non-residents who purchased snowmobile passes</u>	<u>59,623</u>	<u>20</u>
Total universe	296,410	100%

The percentage of people who have a registered snowmobile or who purchased a snowmobile pass that actually went snowmobiling varies from month to month.

Snowmobiling activity tapered off throughout the season with more snowmobiling during the first month of the season (December) and many fewer snowmobiling in the final month (March). Differences were also observed among residents and non-residents.

Percent Who Went Snowmobiling Each Month

	Wisconsin Residents %	Non- Residents %
December	68	75
January	68	71
February	65	68
March	39	24

Residents who snowmobiled locally took more trips per month (8.97) than traveling snowmobilers (2.12 days per month for residents who traveled outside of their local area and 6.42 days per month for non-residents).

On average, snowmobilers traveled in groups of about 5 to 6 people. Out-of-staters tend to travel in slightly larger groups (5.7 people) as compared to Wisconsin residents (5.4 people for local snowmobile trips and 4.8 for non-local snowmobile trips).

During the 2000 – 2001 snowmobile season, there were an estimated 4,475,236 snowmobiler days in Wisconsin. Wisconsin residents snowmobiling locally account for more than half of those snowmobiler days (54%). Traveling snowmobilers account for the remaining snowmobiler days (46%) – 25% non-residents and 21% residents snowmobiling outside of their local area.

Snowmobiler Days
Residents and Non-Residents

	Snowmobiler Days*	Percent of Total Snowmobiler Days
<u>Total Snowmobiler Days</u>	<u>4,475,236</u>	<u>100%</u>
Residents snowmobiling locally	2,412,183	54
<u>Traveling snowmobilers</u>	<u>2,063,053</u>	<u>46</u>
Non-residents	1,138,497	25
Residents outside local area	924,556	21

*Defined as the total number of snowmobilers times the average number of days they participated in this activity during the 2000 – 2001 snowmobile season.

Snowmobiler days are nearly evenly divided between northern* Wisconsin (55%) and southern Wisconsin (45%). Given greater population centers in southern Wisconsin, it is not surprising that there is a greater number of southern Wisconsin residents that snowmobile locally (63%). The majority of traveling snowmobiler days, however, take place in the North (75%).

Snowmobiler Days
Northern Wisconsin and Southern Wisconsin

	Snowmobiler Days	Percent of Snowmobiler Days
<u>Total Snowmobiler Days</u>	<u>4,475,236</u>	<u>100%</u>
Snowmobiler Days in the North*	2,449,757	55
Snowmobiler Days in the South	2,025,479	45
 <u>Residents snowmobiling locally</u>	 <u>2,412,183</u>	 <u>100%</u>
Northern WI residents snowmobiling locally	899,177	37
Southern WI residents snowmobiling locally	1,513,006	63
 <u>Traveling snowmobilers</u>	 <u>2,063,053</u>	 <u>100%</u>
Snowmobilers traveling in the North*	1,550,580	75
Snowmobilers traveling in the South	512,473	25

*The "North" is defined as the following counties: Bayfield, Ashland, Iron, Vilas, Oneida, Forest, Florence, Langlade, Lincoln, Clark, Taylor, Price, Sawyer, Rusk, Washburn, Burnett, Polk, Barron, St. Croix, Pierce, Douglas, Marinette, Menominee, Shawano, and Oconto.

Snowmobiler Expenditures

Those who snowmobiled outside of their local area spent, on average, more than twice as much per day than did those who snowmobiled locally (\$77.78 vs. \$39.61*). Projecting average daily expenditures to the total number of snowmobiling days in Wisconsin during the 2000 – 2001 season, yields an estimated \$249,497,917. These expenditures include all money spent while on the snowmobile trip and exclude expenditures on equipment that was purchased prior to the trip.

As would be expected, two thirds of the total expenditures are spent by snowmobilers who are traveling (64%).

Snowmobiler Expenditures *Residents and Non-Residents*

	Total Expenditures	Percent of Total Expenditures
<u>Total Snowmobiler Expenditures</u>	<u>\$249,497,917</u>	<u>100%</u>
Residents snowmobiling locally	\$89,033,673	36
<u>Traveling snowmobilers</u>	<u>\$160,464,244</u>	<u>64</u>
Non-residents	\$88,552,242	35
Residents snowmobiling outside local area	\$71,912,002	29

*For the purposes of this study, residents who traveled outside their local area (at least 50 miles or more from their primary residence) and non-residents were considered “travelers.” An average expenditure figure was derived for these two groups of snowmobilers combined and used in estimating the total “traveling snowmobiler” expenditures.

Snowmobile trips in the North* account for more than half of all snowmobile expenditures (62%). The majority of expenditures by traveling snowmobilers are spent in the North (75%). Since there are more people in the South who snowmobile locally, it is not surprising that the majority of expenditures for residents on local snowmobile trips are made in the South (63%).

Snowmobiler Expenditures
Northern Wisconsin and Southern Wisconsin

	Total Expenditures	Percent of Expenditures
<u>Total Snowmobiler Expenditures</u>	<u>\$249,497,917</u>	<u>100%</u>
North*	\$153,792,704	62
South	\$95,705,213	38
<u>Residents snowmobiling locally</u>	<u>\$89,033,673</u>	<u>100%</u>
Northern WI residents snowmobiling locally	\$33,188,629	37
Southern WI residents snowmobiling locally	\$55,845,044	63
<u>Traveling snowmobilers</u>	<u>\$160,464,244</u>	<u>100%</u>
Snowmobilers traveling in the North*	\$120,604,075	75
Snowmobilers traveling in the South	\$39,860,169	25

*The "North" is defined as the following counties: Bayfield, Ashland, Iron, Vilas, Oneida, Forest, Florence, Langlade, Lincoln, Clark, Taylor, Price, Sawyer, Rusk, Washburn, Burnett, Polk, Barron, St. Croix, Pierce, Douglas, Marinette, Menominee, Shawano, and Oconto.

Accommodations

For those staying overnight during their snowmobiling trip, one half stayed in unpaid accommodations (52%). However, overnight visitors are just as likely to stay at a hotel/motel/resort (32%) as at a vacation home/cabin/condominium that they own (32%).

Overnight Accommodations

Base: Those who stayed overnight	<u>Total</u> (328)
<u>Paid Accommodations</u>	<u>38%</u>
Hotel/motel/B&B	32
Rented condo/cabin	5
Campground	1
<u>Unpaid Accommodations</u>	<u>52%</u>
Visiting friends or relatives	13
Vacation home of friend or relative	3
Borrowed condo/cabin	3
Second home/condo/cabin	32
Day Tripper	11

Methodology

To arrive at the estimated expenditures, information was gathered from snowmobilers in Wisconsin.

- To determine how many people went snowmobiling during the 2000 – 2001 winter season, a phone survey was conducted with people with registered snowmobiles and those who applied for a snowmobile pass. Both lists were provided by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and included both residents and non-residents of Wisconsin. The survey was completed every month from January through April and covered the previous month's snowmobile trips. In addition, companies that rent snowmobiles were also contacted to estimate the number of rental days. A total of 45 companies that rent snowmobiles were contacted for this study. For more detail, please see **sampling note**.

- In addition, to obtain an accurate estimate of expenditures, 311 snowmobilers completed a questionnaire during the 2000 – 2001 winter season. The questionnaire asked for expenditures in fifteen categories – lodging, food and beverages, liquor purchases, sports fees, popular events admissions, cultural events admissions, other evening events, historic/cultural site admissions, other sightseeing/attractions, tourist shopping, general shopping, ground transportation, sweepstakes tickets, gaming, and licenses/registrations/permits. The questionnaires were distributed to people who snowmobile throughout the State of Wisconsin during the winter season (December 2000 through March 2001).

Sampling note: For the telephone survey, DPA attempted to reach 3,748 people who either registered a snowmobile or purchased a snowmobile pass. A total of 1,048 people were contacted for a response rate of 30%. The overall sample results are therefore accurate to +/- 3.0% at the 95% confidence interval.

	Total #	Accuracy at the 95% confidence level
<u>Contacted</u>	<u>1,048</u>	<u>+/- 3.0%</u>
Did not snowmobile	435	+/- 4.7%
<u>Did snowmobile</u>	<u>613</u>	<u>+/- 4.0%</u>
Wisconsin residents	410	+/- 4.8%
Non-residents	203	+/- 6.9%